



# Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

*An Internationally Accredited Public Safety Agency*

## NEWS ADVISORY

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### **Keep it Clean! Make safety part of your Spring cleaning routine**

Spring cleaning is a great time to focus on safety in and around the home and to identify and correct any potential safety hazards. Following the safety tips outlined below can help get your spring off to a safe start:

- When using ladders, check for safe and proper placement. Be aware of any obstructions including overhead wires and tree branches.
- Inspect your grill prior to use. Check grill hoses for leaks and cracks and store propane tanks away from your house and garage. When disposing of ashes from a charcoal grill, put them in a metal bucket and either soak in water or let stand for several days before disposing of them.
- Recycle: Get rid of old newspapers, magazines and junk mail. These items tend to pile up quickly and can contribute to the severity and spread of fire. Pay special attention to items that may have collected near your furnace, hot water heater, fireplace and stairs over the winter months.
- Check play equipment for loose or exposed hardware, broken parts and stability before children begin playing on outside toys.
- Never operate a lawn mower in your bare feet, avoid wearing loose clothing and wear proper eye protection.
- Be safe with toxic items - household and pool chemicals, paints and poisons should be properly marked and stored under lock and key and safely out of children's reach. Dispose of any that are leaking or expired. Additionally, clean up work areas. Put dangerous tools, adhesives, matches, or other work items out of children's reach.
- Fill lawn mowers, motorbikes and power saws outside and only when the motor is cool.
- Store gasoline in a cool place away from the house in a detached garage or shed, and always in an approved safety can.

- Fire is not the way to get rid of yard waste. Leaf burning and general yard waste burning is not permitted in Montgomery County. Dispose or recycle yard waste properly or mulch/compost yard waste and trimmings.

- Spring is also an important time to assess your home's fire prevention tools and readiness. Following these simple maintenance and prevention tips can help keep you and your loved ones safe:

- Test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure they are working.
- Be sure to change the batteries in all smoke alarms annually. Smoke and carbon monoxide alarm units should be replaced every 10 years, according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Changing weather temperatures can cause windows and doors to stick. Windows should be checked to ensure they can open and close properly in case they are needed as exits in an emergency.
- Review and practice your home escape plan. Conduct a home fire drill and be sure everyone knows the location of your family's outdoor meeting place.
- Make sure your house address numbers are visible from the street. Addresses that are hidden, unreadable or have missing numbers may delay emergency responders from getting to you as quickly as possible.

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